**Shelley Beattie, 1968-2008**

Shelley Beattie (August 24, 1967 – February 16, 2008) was a professional female bodybuilder and actress not to mention a great role model for deaf people everywhere.

At the peak of her competitive career as a professional bodybuilder Beattie managed to reach the top-three at the Ms. International and Ms. Olympia contests, the two most prestigious shows for female professional bodybuilders. She was also well known for having been one of the few deaf professional female bodybuilders in the world, making the cover of [DeafLife](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=DeafLife&action=edit&redlink=1) magazine twice in the '90s. After her retirement she joined the Grinder on America3's America's Cup team and managed to reach second place in such competition in 1994 and again in 1995.

Shelley Ann Beattie was born in Orange County, California. At the age of three, Beattie suffered a hearing loss from an aspirin overdose. Her peers' misunderstandings and lack of education about people who are deaf led to trouble socializing. Since she could only understand her classmates if they were facing her, she had difficulty communicating with her classmates, who assumed she was mentally disadvantaged and rejected her. Beattie became a loner and began to use sports to deal with her frustrations and lack of social life. She also learned sign language and had several operations and speech therapy to improve her ability to communicate.

In school, Beattie began to compete in track and field, including [Heptathlon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heptathlon), [Cross Country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_country_running), [Hurdling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurdling), and [400 meter sprints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/400_metres). A gifted athlete, she was a natural in all these events. Her specialty was the low hurdle, where she set school records. As a standout in track and field, Beattie enjoyed the competition. Her hearing loss was not a factor when she was running. Beattie began lifting weights at 14 to improve her time in the hurdles and 400s. She wanted to compete against the boys since she was so much better than the girls on her team. Weight lifting was also a way for Beattie to rebel. She wanted to stand out from the other girls, and knew that weight lifting would allow her to achieve this. She first began weight training in her high school's small weight room, and made quick gains. By the age of 15, she was seeing the results of her time in the gym.

During her competitive days as a professional she competed at a height of 5 feet 7 inches (1.70 m) in a body weight of around 144 pounds (65 kg) and soon became known for her great genetics as well as her graceful and artistic presentation while competing. Beattie credited the genetics of her athletic family for her physical abilities: her mother is a 6-foot-tall (1.8 m) athlete, while her sister is a 5-foot-10-inch (1.78 m), 180-pound (82 kg) basketball player at Portland State University. After winning the 1990 NPC USA and turning pro she found herself in some problems with the politics of the bodybuilding federation known as the [IFBB](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Federation_of_BodyBuilders); she was unable to compete at the 1990 Ms. Olympia after her USA victory. She also was unhappy when some contest promises were not fulfilled. Beattie said, "Certain benefits and reimbursements from the USA that I was supposed to receive have never happened. I have made the proper people aware of this situation, so I'm hoping that one day they will fulfill their obligations." After missing the 1990 Ms. Olympia she competed for the first time as a professional at the 1991 Ms. International where she finished 3rd. The same year she reached 7th at Ms. Olympia. The next year, 1992, she added more poise and grace to her physique and presentation and managed to finish 3rd at Ms. Olympia, her highest professional bodybuilding achievement. She won the heavyweight and overall at the USA in 1990 at the age of 23 and competed as a pro for the next three years, placing third at the Ms. Olympia - the most prestigious show in women's bodybuilding -in 1992.She retired from bodybuilding competition after placing 7th in the 1993 Ms. Olympia contest.

Retirement from bodybuilding didn't bring an end to her athletic endeavors, though. She was also a member of America³, the first ever all-female America’s Cup team, in 1995. The **America’s Cup** is a trophy awarded to the winner of the America's Cup match races between two sailing yachts. One yacht, known as the defender, represents the yacht club that currently holds the America's Cup and the second yacht, known as the challenger, represents the yacht club that is challenging for the cup. The America's Cup is the oldest active trophy in international sport. Beattie competed as a grinder on the American sailing team. Grinders alternate between periods of inactivity and grueling physical work during each sail hoist, tack, and gybe. They require tremendous strength as they operate the winches that reel in the sheets and halyards.



During the early 1990s, Beattie also joined the *American Gladiators* TV show . *American Gladiators* was an American competition television program that aired in syndication from September 1989 to May 1996. The series matched a cast of amateur athletes against each other, as well as against the show's own gladiators, in contests of strength and agility.She became known as "Siren" on the TV show for three seasons performing in 44 episodes between 1992 and 1997. Because she was deaf, she received visual cues from referee Larry Thompson as well as from fellow Gladiator, Salina "Elektra" Bartunek, while competing. Spectators would wave their hands in the air or stomp their feet, rather than applaud, to acknowledge her performances. She was an inspiration a whole generation of girls who saw her on TV, including some of today’s top female bodybuilders



She was in a long term relationship with John Romano, a well-known columnist for the magazine *Muscular Development*, for six years. Until her death, bisexual Beattie lived on a farm east of Salem, Oregon, with her girlfriend, Julie Moisa, and worked with people with physical impairments. She also made drums and jewelry, and worked as a personal trainer.

She had long battled manic depression and attempted suicide by hanging herself in Portland, Oregon on February 13, 2008. Shelley Beattie aka "Siren"died three days later without regaining consciousness. She was just 39 years-old.